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News Letter

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL NUTRITION PROGRAM

In the November News Letter we mentioned reconversion problems related to war programs, referring particularly to the need for continuing programs in food and nutrition education. We cited the situation in this respect in Great Britain, as outlined in a recent report by the Children's Nutrition Council, and we noted that our own considerations in adapting the wartime nutrition program to peacetime needs had some generally similar characteristics.

Where there is an inevitable "interim" period in these transition stages, we feel that the essential structure of the wartime nutrition program in the United States is being kept intact. Histories of the State programs which we are receiving from many of the State committees testify to the strong status of State and local committee organization. Also, other communications from the State nutrition committee chairmen indicate that the committees, while handicapped in carrying out full programs, are still meeting and continuing their committee work—this despite the fact that the services of our former field consultants are no longer available and in the majority of States the committees have not yet been able to replace their executive secretaries.

Similarly, the Federal Nutrition Planning Committee is meeting regularly each month and Federal agency programs here and in the field are being brought into a continuing closer relationship through the work of this committee. Such coordination is of major importance in connection with the postwar programs, for as long as the individual work of the several public agencies, in the local communities, in the States, and in Washington, is kept in this kind of relationship, the basis of a national program is carried forward almost automatically.

Cooperation of individuals and groups with public agencies specifically charged with responsibility for nutrition programs is another important ele-

ment in a successful national nutrition program. New steps in the Nation-wide programs of the future, when they are established on a longer-range basis, can be built on the experience agencies and individuals have gained, in working together on the nutrition program during the war.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION¹

The Food and Agriculture Organization (hereafter referred to as FAO) came into existence on October 16, 1945, in Quebec, Canada. The number of nations which had joined the organization when the conference adjourned, November 1, was 42. There were 37 nations represented at the conference. Sir John Boyd Orr of the United Kingdom was unanimously chosen Director-General to serve until December 31, 1947. The conference elected an executive committee of 15. Their names and terms of office are:

Sir Girja Bajpai, India, 2 years;
Edouard Baker, Haiti, 1 year;
G. S. H. Barton, Canada, 1 year;
Newton Castro Belleza, Brazil, 3 years;
R. R. Enfield, United Kingdom, 1 year;
E. J. Fawcett, New Zealand, 1 year;
Anders Fjelstad, Norway, 2 years;
Alfonso Gonsales Gallarado, Mexico, 1 year;
Darwish Haidari, Iraq, 2 years;
Andre Mayer, France, 2 years;
Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, Poland, 2 years;
Howard R. Tolley, United States, 3 years;
P. W. Tsou, China, 3 years;
P. R. Viljoen, Union of South Africa, 3 years;
Arthur Wauters, Belgium, 3 years.

¹ Because of the significance of the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the major portion of this News Letter is given over to a brief report of the organization itself and to the recommendations of the Committee on Nutrition and Food Management. State items omitted from this issue will appear in the January letter.

On the recommendation of the Interim Committee, the conference established two working commissions: Commission A on Policy and Programs; Commission B on Organization and Administration. Commission A set up the following six committees:

Nutrition and Food Management	Agriculture
Forestry and Forest Products	Fisheries
	Marketing
	Statistics

Andre Mayer of France, vice president of the College of France, served as chairman of the Committee on Nutrition and Food Management. United States members of that Committee were Dr. Thomas Parran, Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service; Dr. Hazel Stiebeling, Chief, BHNHE, U. S. Department of Agriculture; Miss Anna Lord Strauss, president, National League of Women Voters; and M. L. Wilson, Director of Extension Work, and Chief, Nutrition Programs, Production and Marketing Administration, USDA.

Recommendations—Committee on Nutrition and Food Management.—Following is a digest of the recommendations of this Committee adopted by the FAO in plenary session, October 25, 1945:

Introduction.—Since the primary objective of the FAO is to raise levels of nutrition throughout the world, its work in the field of nutrition must be closely integrated with that of all other branches of FAO and with that of other national organizations concerned with health, social, and economic problems, and the welfare of industrial workers.

Since there is ample evidence of the existence of malnutrition in every country, with its inevitable consequence of preventable ill health, "The first steps toward freedom from want must not await the final solution of all problems."

Hunger and Malnutrition.—To eliminate hunger and malnutrition as rapidly as possible an immediate survey should be made of available food resources, supplies, and requirements of needy countries. Every effort should be made to direct food supplies where most needed, to stimulate production of foods in short supply, and to insure that the utmost value in terms of nutrition be obtained from available foods.

While the war has accentuated the food situation in many countries a large section of the world's population has always been undernourished and malnour-

ished. One method of attacking the problem is to choose groups of people in typical areas and attempt to raise their standards of living and nutrition by every means. Comprehensive studies of surveys and natural resources may be carried out by national agencies encouraged and supported by FAO.

Vulnerable Groups.—Improvement of the diet of vulnerable groups should be both an immediate preoccupation of FAO and part of its long-term planning. While there is general agreement that providing nutritious meals for school children is most effective for improving the nutrition of youth—practical methods to be followed geared to local dietary habits—food financial resources are not yet universal throughout the world.

National Nutrition Organizations.—One of the first tasks of FAO in the field of nutrition should be to encourage the formation or revitalization of national nutrition organizations in all countries. Although inevitably circumstances and methods of such organizations will vary in different countries their objectives should include the formulation of food policies, the coordination of research, and the development of operational and educational programs for the improvement of nutrition.

An early meeting of the representatives of national nutrition organizations should be called by FAO. Special emphasis should be placed on pregnant and nursing women, infants, and pre-school and school children, as well as on adolescents, workers, individuals with low incomes, and large families in the low-income groups.

Training in Nutrition.—National nutrition organizations cannot function effectively without some knowledge of nutrition and the guidance of competent nutrition specialists. Many countries have been retarded because of lack of such knowledge among administrators, doctors, health workers, agricultural experts, social workers, home economists, etc. FAO should make every effort to develop appropriate teaching and training in nutrition in existing national institutions and organizations.

Collaboration With Health and Other International Organizations.—Because of the close association between food and health, it is essential that there be close collaboration between FAO and the projected United Nations Health Organization.

Food Conservation and Technology.—An early activity of FAO might well be the study of the problem of conserving the nutritional value of foods, particularly of staple foods, for the purpose of insuring against the unnecessary loss of nutrients. This would include such important questions as the effect of milling and domestic methods of preparation on the nutritive value of cereals, such as rice, wheat, and corn.

Various Problems Which May Be Studied in Collaboration With Experts.—Included in the program of work should be the following:

a. Dietary Standards. It is suggested that FAO convene a group of experts who, in cooperation with United Nations health organizations, should attempt to define tentative dietary standards in order to facilitate the comparison of levels of food consumption in different countries and the assessment of food needs.

b. Dietary Surveys and Their Technique. While some countries have given attention to standardizing methods of investigating food consumption in order to obtain accurate and comparable data, work in this field should be continued by FAO.

c. The Composition of Foods. FAO can assist individual countries in making an analysis of the foods consumed by their populations.

d. Classifications of Foods. Since one of the duties of FAO will be the collection of food consumption data in different countries and the results of diet surveys, agreement on methods of grouping foods in accordance with their nutritive value and on the number of groupings would facilitate comparison and analysis on an international basis.

e. Popular Education. The need for educating the public in nutrition strongly stressed at the Hot Springs conference was reaffirmed. Current educational methods have not always been effective and leave room for improvement.

f. Collection of Data. With the help of national nutrition organizations, FAO should undertake to collect data about food consumption, dietary habits, the state of nutrition of populations, the prevalence of malnutrition and deficiency diseases, and measures taken to improve nutrition throughout the world.

g. Information Services. FAO must be prepared to supply accurate, useful, and up-to-date information on nutrition and food management.

Other Lines of Work.—Although the above questions are worthy of special attention in the immediate future, other useful activities in the field of nutrition and food management, which should be included in a long-term program, are:

a. Consideration of the effect on food consumption of social and economic policies and measures, including among the latter, legislation to secure minimum wages, social security, family allowances, taxation of various kinds, subsidies of agricultural products, and special feeding programs.

b. Consideration of the social and psychological background of dietary habits.

c. The discovery and development of food-plant strains and varieties which have high nutritive value and the encouragement of their cultivation.

d. Assistance to nutrition workers in the botanical identification of food plants.

Excerpt From the Director-General's Speech.—In his brief acceptance speech, the Director-General pointed out that the recent advance of science had let loose in the world tremendous new physical forces which can never again be bottled up and that the alternatives facing governments are cooperation for their mutual benefit or war for their mutual destruction. He said further that it was fitting that the FAO should be the first of the United Nations organizations because it deals with the primary necessity of life.

NATIONAL ADVISORY GARDEN COMMITTEE

The National Advisory Garden Committee, meeting in Washington, August 28, sent a formal report to the Secretary of Agriculture calling his attention to the splendid accomplishments of the victory garden program during the past 5 years. Millions of patriotic Americans cultivated from 18 to 20 million home gardens each year during the above period. These gardens produced annually 40 percent of the country's fresh vegetables. Housewives in urban and rural areas preserved 3,400,-000 quarts of vegetables and fruits, thus helping materially to augment the national food supply and at the same time to develop better food habits and thus to improve the health of their families. Based on these results the committee felt that the victory garden program had been one of the home front's

most successful and vital wartime activities. With the war at an end, the committee evaluated its past accomplishments, examined the prospective peacetime needs of the country for home-grown foods that may be supplied through home and community gardens. A summary of the recommendations to the Secretary follows:

a. That a broad program of home gardening and home food production to promote health, economy, attractive surroundings, and recreation should be made a definite part of the plans of the Department of Agriculture, State agricultural colleges, the Extension Service, and all appropriate State agencies, including public schools and private organizations.

b. That the anticipated increase in population of rural areas due to the decentralization of industry and business emphasizes a greater need for home gardens to improve the standard of living of our people.

c. That the Department of Agriculture through the Extension Service expand and intensify its program of farm, home gardening, food production and preservation, and growing of fruits.

d. That personnel trained in horticulture and home economics be made available to assist urban and suburban families in carrying out the above.

e. That the Department of Agriculture continue and strengthen its work in nutrition and home-food preservation, with special emphasis on the contribution of home gardeners.

f. That the Department of Agriculture assist other agencies in encouraging gardening as an aid in the rehabilitation of war veterans and displaced industrial workers.

g. That the Department of Agriculture, the U. S. Office of Education, State departments of education, and youth organizations encourage gardening as a school and home activity.

h. That there be continued emphasis on highway beautification, the improvement of school grounds, railway stations, public buildings, and industrial plants.

i. That the Secretary of Agriculture call a national peacetime garden conference during the fall of 1945.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING VITAMINS

A film strip consisting of 21 frames which illustrates the loss of certain vitamins through the improper preparation and cooking of fresh and canned foods. The illustrations are accompanied by appropriate comments in verse by Mrs. Phyllis Newill. One film strip has been furnished each State nutrition committee chairman.

Sincerely yours,



M. L. Wilson, Chief,
Nutrition Programs.



W. H. Sebrell, Associate Chief,
Nutrition Programs.